

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

Los Angeles, California

Profile of Drug Indicators

January 2003



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Los Angeles, California

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Population (2000 Census): 3,694,820
- Race/Ethnicity (2000 Census): 29.7% white; 10.9% black/African American; 0.2% American Indian/Alaska Native; 9.9% Asian; 0.1% Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; 0.2% some other race; 2.4% two or more races; 46.5% Hispanic/Latino (of any race)
- The city of Los Angeles is located in Los Angeles County.

Politics

- Mayor: James Hahn²
- City Council (Districts 1-15, respectively): Ed Reyes; Wendy Greuel; Dennis Zine; Tom LaBonge; Jack Weiss; Ruth Galanter; Alex Padilla; Mark Ridley-Thomas; Jan Perry; Nate Holden; Cindy Miscikowski; Hal Bernson; Eric Garcetti; Nick Pacheco; Janice Hahn³
- Chief of Police, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD): William J. Bratton⁴
- Los Angeles County Sheriff: Leroy Baca⁵

Programs/Initiatives

- High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)⁶
Designated in 1990, the Los Angeles HIDTA is responsible for Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties.
- DARE + PLUS (Play and Learn Under Supervision)⁷
This program, designed to help 6th - 8th graders stay involved in school and away from gangs, drugs, and violence, provides after-school activities in a safe and well-supervised campus setting.

Federal Funding

- Drug-Free Communities Support Program grantees in Los Angeles:⁸
 - FY 2002: no grantees
 - FY 2001: Dunbar Economic Development Corporation received \$64,559.
 - FY 2000: no grantees
 - FY 1999: Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention/Treatment received \$100,000.
 - FY 1998: Project Heavy West received \$54,459.
- FY 2001 SAMHSA Discretionary Funds received in Los Angeles:⁹
 - \$3,063,132 to the University of California Los Angeles. Project period 9/30/01-9/29/04.
 - \$340,000 to Children's Institute International. Project period 9/30/01-9/29/04.
 - \$350,000 to the United American Indian Involvement. Project period 9/30/01-9/29/04.

- \$50,000 to National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse. Project period 5/01/01-4/30/02.
- \$384,739 to Matrix Institute. Project period 9/30/00-9/29/03.
- \$393,381 to the Regents of the University of California. Project period 9/30/01-9/29/04.
- \$99,500 to the University of California. Project period 9/30/98-9/29/02.
- \$484,782 to Alcoholism Center for Women. Project period 9/30/00-9/29/03.
- Executive Office for Weed and Seed¹⁰
Two areas of Los Angeles have been designated official Weed and Seed sites. One site is located in South Central Los Angeles, while the other is located in the Pico Union/Koreatown area of Los Angeles.
- Los Angeles did not receive funding from the FY 2002 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Grant Program.¹¹
- FY 2001 Office of Justice Programs and Community Oriented Policing Services grant amounts received in Los Angeles:¹²
 - \$61,483,775 in formula funds
 - \$9,152,703 in discretionary funds
- FY 2001 Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Grant amount received in Los Angeles:¹³
 - \$130,000 awarded to Skid Row Housing Trust.
- Los Angeles Impact received \$250,000 in methamphetamine funding in FY 2002 from the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS).¹⁴

Crime and Drug Related Crime

- During 2000, there were 165,424 total part I crimes in Los Angeles. This number increased to 177,068 in 2002.¹⁵

Number of Offenses Known to Law Enforcement, Los Angeles, 2000-2002

| Offense | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Homicide | 562 | 597 | 658 |
| Rape | 1,403 | 1,321 | 1,337 |
| Robbery | 15,486 | 17,062 | 17,184 |
| Aggravated assault | 18,139 | 18,942 | 19,128 |
| Burglary | 24,304 | 25,420 | 25,187 |
| Larceny | 76,031 | 78,971 | 79,553 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 29,499 | 31,619 | 34,021 |
| Total part I crimes | 165,424 | 173,932 | 177,068 |

- During 2000, there were more than 21,000 adult arrests for drug law violations in Los Angeles.¹⁶ The number of adults arrested for drug law violations in Los Angeles decreased in 2001 to 20,090.¹⁷

Number of Adult Arrests for Drug/Alcohol-Related Offenses, Los Angeles, 2000-2001

| Offense | 2000 | 2001 |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Narcotic drug laws | 21,149 | 20,090 |
| Liquor laws | 4,570 | 3,825 |
| Drunkenness | 10,301 | 8,520 |
| DUI | 11,262 | 10,152 |

- PCP related drug arrests decreased from 103 in the first half of 2000 to 64 during that same period in 2001.¹⁸
- During 2000, 12.3% of adult female arrestees in Los Angeles tested positive for methamphetamine at the time of arrest. 31.5% of female arrestees tested positive for marijuana and 1.5% tested positive for PCP at arrest.¹⁹
- 25.6% of the Los Angeles females arrested reported using crack in the 30 days prior to their arrest. 2.4% reported powder cocaine use and 3.0% reported using opiates in the 30 days prior to their arrest. 11.5% reporting using marijuana in the past 30 days.²⁰

Drugs

➤ Heroin

Heroin is somewhat available in Los Angeles and is associated with the most serious consequences. Mexican black tar (a lower purity, injectable heroin) and Mexican brown heroin are widely available. Users tend to be young adults (18-30 years old), adults (30 years and older), white, Hispanic, and black.²¹ Mexican black tar sells for \$16,000-\$17,000 wholesale, with a street value of \$35,000-\$50,000. Heroin purchased in Los Angeles during 2000 had an average purity level of 23%.²²

➤ Cocaine

Crack cocaine is widely available to somewhat available in the Los Angeles area. Adolescents (under 18 years old), young adults (18-30 years old), and adults (over 30 years old) are all likely to use crack cocaine. Use among black and Hispanic users is also prevalent. Powder cocaine is widely available to not very available in the Los Angeles area.²³ A kilogram of cocaine costs \$16,500 wholesale with a purity level ranging from 80-85%.²⁴

➤ Marijuana

Marijuana is widely available in the Los Angeles area.²⁵ Law enforcement report that Canadian "BC bud" (British Colombia) that was previously only found in the Pacific Northwest is now available in the Los Angeles area. A pound of marijuana sells for \$350 wholesale, but is worth \$2,500 on the street. Mexican produced marijuana has a low purity level, between 4-6%, compared to domestic hydroponic marijuana with an average purity level of 25-30%. Because of its low purity level and wide availability, Mexican marijuana is usually the most inexpensive type found in the Los Angeles area.²⁶

- **Methamphetamine**
Methamphetamine is widely available in the Los Angeles area and availability has increased in recent years. “Ice” is also available in Los Angeles. The predominate user group is also the youngest age group (13-17 years old), although adolescent users are increasing.²⁷ According to the Los Angeles HIDTA and DEA, methamphetamine tablets known as “yaba” are available, but the market is limited to raves and nightclubs. These tablets are often sold as MDMA or in addition to it. A pound of methamphetamine costs \$4,000-\$5,000 at wholesale prices, but is worth \$35,000-\$50,000 at the street level.²⁸
- **Club Drugs**
Use of club drugs is increasing in popularity at clubs and raves. Also, an increasing number of people are using these drugs in their homes or in other social setting. The Los Angeles DEA is warning of an emerging concern for “crystal ecstasy,” although use has not been observed in the Los Angeles area. “Crystal ecstasy” has a purity level of 96% compared to other ecstasy that has an average purity level of 35%. PCP has a street value of \$30,000 a gallon and a wholesale value of \$7,250 a gallon in Los Angeles.²⁹
- **Diverted Pharmaceuticals**
Local law enforcement consider OxyContin to be a significant problem in the Los Angeles area. There are numerous chat rooms on the Internet devoted to OxyContin and how it is illegally purchased.³⁰

Juveniles

- During 2000, 8.5% of juvenile male detainees and 2.1% of juvenile female detainees tested positive for methamphetamine at arrest. 1% of juvenile male detainees and 2.1% of juvenile female detainees tested positive for PCP at arrest.³¹
- During 2000, there were 1,819 juvenile arrests for drug law violations in Los Angeles.³² The number of juvenile arrests for drug law violations in Los Angeles decreased to 1,531 in 2001.³³

Number of Juvenile Arrests, Selected Offenses, Los Angeles, 2000-2001

| Offense | 2000 | 2001 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|
| Homicide | 42 | 49 |
| Rape | 30 | 29 |
| Robbery | 735 | 791 |
| Aggravated assault | 797 | 707 |
| Burglary | 886 | 773 |
| Larceny | 1,998 | 1,743 |
| Motor vehicle theft | 876 | 859 |
| Narcotic drug laws | 1,819 | 1,531 |
| Liquor laws | 70 | 93 |
| Drunkenness | 23 | 27 |
| DUI | 40 | 31 |

- In Los Angeles during 2001, 41.2% of high school students surveyed reported using marijuana within their lifetime.³⁴

Percentage of Students Reporting Drug Use, Los Angeles, 2001

| | Female | Male | Total |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|
| Lifetime marijuana use | 36.8% | 45.5% | 41.2% |
| Current marijuana use | 18.6 | 26.2 | 22.5 |
| Lifetime cocaine use | 10.4 | 9.5 | 10.1 |
| Current cocaine use | 6.2 | 5.8 | 5.9 |
| Lifetime inhalant use | 17.5 | 17.0 | 17.2 |
| Current inhalant use | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.6 |
| Lifetime heroin use | 1.8 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| Lifetime methamphetamine use | 7.7 | 7.4 | 7.6 |
| Lifetime illegal steroid use | 4.9 | 3.6 | 4.4 |
| Lifetime injecting illegal drug use | 1.0 | 1.9 | 1.5 |
| Tried marijuana before age 13 years | 7.7 | 15.6 | 11.7 |

Enforcement

- As of October 31, 2001, there were 11,979 full-time law enforcement employees in Los Angeles, 8,943 officers and 3,036 civilians.³⁵
- Los Angeles HIDTA initiatives include the following:³⁶
 - Southern California Drug Task Force: The primary objective of this multi-agency task force is to conduct long-term, complex investigations targeting major narcotics trafficking organizations that operate on a regional, national, and international level.
 - Methamphetamine Regional Strike Force: The mission of this task force is to target major methamphetamine production and distribution organizations, investigate and seize methamphetamine laboratories, and target chemical companies that illegally sell precursor chemicals.
 - Regional Narcotics Suppression Program: This multi-agency task force focuses on major narcotic traffickers and money launders operating in and through the Los Angeles HIDTA region.

Trafficking and Seizures

- During 2001, the Los Angeles Police Department seized more than 12,000 pounds of marijuana.³⁷

Amount of Drugs Seized (in Pounds), Los Angeles, 1998-2001

| Drug Type | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Heroin | 144 | 89 | 47 | 365 |
| Cocaine | 3,416 | 4,344 | 2,375 | 1,031 |
| PCP | 241 | 40 | 33 | 27 |
| Marijuana | 26,450 | 31,951 | 19,316 | 12,705 |
| Methamphetamine | 2,598 | 1,012 | 404 | 264 |

- The street value of marijuana seized during 2001 was more than \$115 million.³⁸

Street Value of Drugs Seized, Los Angeles, 1998-2001

| Drug Type | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|-----------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Heroin | \$16,120,463 | \$9,963,342 | \$5,843,555 | \$47,015,559 |
| Cocaine | 155,079,568 | 197,208,912 | 75,493,387 | 29,595,802 |
| PCP | 4,623,103 | 767,320 | 1,239,688 | 1,435,491 |
| Marijuana | 240,139,550 | 290,083,129 | 175,392,298 | 115,466,248 |
| Meth. | 117,949,200 | 45,944,800 | 20,474,900 | 11,937,118 |
| Total | 533,911,884 | 543,967,503 | 278,443,828 | 205,450,218 |

- The trafficking of cocaine is a significant problem in the Los Angeles area.³⁹
- Los Angeles is a major transportation and distribution hub for Mexican black tar and brown powdered heroin that is destined for other parts of California and the U.S. Los Angeles also serves as the transportation and distribution hub for cocaine.⁴⁰
- Russian and Israeli drug trafficking organizations smuggle the majority of MDMA into California and transport it to Los Angeles using couriers on commercial air flights.⁴¹
- Los Angeles based African American street gangs produce and distribute PCP.⁴²
- Mexican marijuana distributors in Los Angeles purchase B.C. bud and mix it with Mexican produced marijuana. They later market this combination as B.C. bud.⁴³
- Customs officials at the Los Angeles International airport often intercept Khat smuggled in quantities of up to 100 pounds.⁴⁴
- The U.S. Customs Service reported a seizure of 2,100,000 tablets/pills of ecstasy in Los Angeles during July 2000. The tablets originated from Europe.⁴⁵

Courts

- Drug Courts⁴⁶
As of January 8, 2003, 13 drug courts have been in existence for more than two years in Los Angeles County. One new drug court was recently implemented and another is being planned in the County.
- In Southern California during FY 2001, there were 4,213 Federal defendants, 42.2% of who were charged with a drug-related crime. The most common drugs involved were marijuana (76.8%), powder cocaine (10.4%), methamphetamine (9.4%), heroin (2.2%), other (1.0%), and crack cocaine (0.3%).⁴⁷
- According to the Los Angeles County Sheriff, there were 23,741 total felonies filed and 39,901 total misdemeanors filed in the county during 2001. Narcotics offenses represented 36% of felonies filed and 14% of misdemeanors filed.⁴⁸

Corrections

- During FY 2000-2001, there were 4,185 inmates in the Los Angeles County State prison.⁴⁹

Consequences of Use

- There were 76 emergency department (ED) MDMA mentions for in Los Angeles from January to June 2002.⁵⁰

Number of ED Drug Mentions, Selected Drugs, Los Angeles, 1998-June 2002

| Drug Type | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | Jan-June 2002 |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| Alcohol-in-combination | 6,129 | 8,195 | 10,993 | 10,907 | 5,249 |
| Cocaine | 5,779 | 6,768 | 9,094 | 9,999 | 4,652 |
| Heroin | 2,601 | 2,923 | 3,177 | 2,878 | 1,245 |
| Marijuana | 3,422 | 5,472 | 5,846 | 5,729 | 3,037 |
| Amphetamines | 541 | 866 | 1,072 | 1,261 | 685 |
| Methamphetamine | 786 | 910 | 1,375 | 1,517 | 700 |
| MDMA (Ecstasy) | 30 | 52 | 177 | 142 | 76 |
| Ketamine | -- | 7 | 15 | 14 | 11 |
| LSD | 162 | 229 | 217 | 175 | 62 |
| PCP | 605 | 731 | 823 | 990 | 543 |
| Miscellaneous hallucinogens | 33 | 42 | 88 | 86 | 26 |
| Rohypnol | 0 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| GHB | 48 | 130 | 149 | 83 | -- |
| Inhalants | 30 | 36 | 35 | -- | 13 |
| Combinations not tabulated above | -- | 2 | 8 | 7 | -- |
| Total drug abuse episodes | 17,103 | 20,677 | 25,286 | 24,669 | 11,266 |
| Total drug abuse mentions | 29,805 | 36,945 | 45,015 | 44,670 | 20,922 |

➤ In Los Angeles during 2000, medical examiners reported 1,192 drug-related deaths.⁵¹

Number of Medical Examiner Drug Mentions, Los Angeles, 1996-2000

| Drug Type | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Alcohol-in-combination | 425 | 316 | 405 | 500 | 395 |
| Cocaine | 546 | 450 | 425 | 544 | 471 |
| Heroin/morphine | 554 | 425 | 444 | 644 | 473 |
| Marijuana | 9 | 12 | 17 | 24 | 32 |
| Amphetamines | 93 | 122 | 78 | 102 | 61 |
| Methamphetamine | 146 | 172 | 111 | 147 | 155 |
| Club drugs | -- | 2 | 6 | 18 | 27 |
| Hallucinogens | 38 | 20 | 13 | 25 | 22 |
| Inhalants | 13 | 12 | 28 | 70 | -- |
| Narcotic analgesics | 341 | 292 | 315 | 530 | 407 |
| Other analgesics | 32 | 34 | 58 | 95 | 115 |
| Benzodiazepines | 155 | 132 | 182 | 213 | 142 |
| Antidepressants | 244 | 191 | 248 | 441 | 293 |
| All other substances | 339 | 361 | 506 | 1,175 | 392 |
| Total drug deaths | 1,154 | 982 | 1,134 | 1,887 | 1,192 |
| Total drug mentions | 2,935 | 2,541 | 2,836 | 4,528 | 2,985 |

- Injection-related AIDS cases in Los Angeles were 39% black, 31% white, and 28% Hispanic.⁵²
- Hepatitis B cases declined in Los Angeles by 29% during the first half of 2001 compared to the first half of 2000.⁵³

Treatment

- In Los Angeles County during 2000, 21.6% of the total treatment admissions were for cocaine/crack. This percentage increased to 23.7% in 2001.⁵⁴
- In Los Angeles County during 2000, 56.8% of the total treatment admissions were for heroin. This percentage decreased to 33.5% in 2001.⁵⁵
- During 2000, marijuana accounted for 8.8% of all treatment admissions in Los Angeles County. This percentage increased to 11.5% in the first half of 2001.⁵⁶
- Methamphetamine admissions accounted for 10.2% of total treatment admission during 2000 in Los Angeles City.⁵⁷
- There were 50 hallucinogen treatment admissions in Los Angeles City during 2000.⁵⁸
- In Los Angeles, PCP treatment admissions increased from 166 in the second half of 2000 to 198 in the first half of 2001.⁵⁹
- During 2000, there were 49,651 substance abuse treatment admissions in Los Angeles.⁶⁰

Number of Treatment Admissions, Los Angeles, 2000

| Primary Substance | 2000 |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Alcohol | 9,206 |
| Alcohol with other drugs | Unknown |
| Cocaine/crack | 8,951 |
| Heroin | 22,975 |
| Marijuana | 3,553 |
| Stimulants | 4,288 |
| Other drugs | 678 |
| Total | 49,651 |

Sources

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² Los Angeles Mayor's Web site: <http://www.lacity.org/mayor/>

³ Los Angeles City Council Web site: <http://www.lacity.org/council.htm>

⁴ Los Angeles Police Department Web site: <http://www.lapdonline.org>

⁵ Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Web site: <http://lasd.org/>

⁶ Office of National Drug Control Policy, Los Angeles High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Web site: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/hidta/frames_la.html

⁷ Los Angeles Police Department Web site, DARE + PLUS section: http://www.lapdonline.org/youth_programs/dare_plus/yp_dare_plus.htm

⁸ Drug-Free Communities Support Program, California Grantees: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/dfcs/states/ca.html>

⁹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration, FY 2001 Formula and Discretionary Grant Allotments, California: <http://www.samhsa.gov/funding/content/states01/ca.htm>

¹⁰ Executive Office for Weed and Seed, Data Center, California: <http://www.weedandseeddatacenter.org/california.html>

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